Motor Vehicle Size & Weight Regulations =

Minn. Stat. §§ 169.011, 169.80-169.88

= HOUSE RESEARCH =

Various size and weight regulations apply to motor vehicles operated on public roads, and are contained in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 169. The regulations can be divided into four general parts:

- 1) limits on vehicle dimensions (namely, height, width, and length)
- 2) core vehicle weight limits, which form the basic limitations on motor vehicle weight
- 3) weight limit adjustments that raise or lower allowed weights
- 4) special permits allowing increased weights, provided by application under specific circumstances

The tables below summarize many of the dimensional and weight regulations. Note that most of the regulations carry additional requirements and conditions such as escorts and times of travel. Also, the summary does not discuss various related motor carrier regulations (like load securement, inspections, and record keeping).

Dimension Limit	Limitations ¹	Comments	Citation
Height	13 ft., 6 in.	Exceptions for double-deck buses, implements of husbandry ² , some farm vehicles transporting baled hay	169.81, subd. 1; 169.862, subd. 2 (f)
Width	8 ft., 6 in.	Exceptions for certain vehicles transporting sewage sludge, certain low-bed trailers or dollies, passenger buses, implements of husbandry, some farm vehicles transporting baled hay	169.80, subd. 2; 169.862, subd. 2 (f)
Length of single vehicle	45 ft.	Exceptions for mobile cranes, articulated buses	169.81, subds. 2, 3e
Length of vehicle combinations ³	75 ft.	Exceptions for transporting certain poles and pipes, some vehicle combinations operated on divided highways, some saddlemount combinations	169.81, subd. 3; 23 CFR § 658.13 (e) (1) (iii)
Length of various trailers	45 – 53 ft.	Length limit depends on type of trailer; some trailers in three-vehicle combinations cannot exceed $28 \frac{1}{2}$ ft.	169.81, subds. 2- 3; 169.86, subd. 1
Length of recreational vehicle combination	70 ft.		169.81, subd. 3c

Maximum Dimensions

Notes

¹ Limitations do not account for various special permits.

² "Implements of husbandry" are self-propelled or towed vehicles used for farming, timber, horticultural, or livestock operations (such as a tractor or combine harvester). Minn. Stat. § 169.011, subd. 35.

³ "Vehicle combinations" are sets of vehicles transported together, with a towing unit and one or more trailers.

Table does not identify various requirements and details associated with the dimension limits. Some exceptions require a special permit.

Core Vehicle Weight Limits

Type ¹	Limitations	Comments	Citation
Per set of tires	Lesser of (1) manufacturer's rating, or (2) 500 or 600 pounds per in. of tire width ²	Weight on all adjacent tires at each end of one axle	169.823, subd. 1
Per wheel	9,000 lbs. on unpaved roads; 10,000 lbs. on paved roads	Weight on all adjacent tires at each end of one axle	169.823, subd. 1
Per axle	18,000 lbs. on unpaved roads; 20,000 lbs. on paved roads	Weight on one axle	169.824
Per axle groupings	Varies with number of axles and distances between axle groups	Limits apply to each grouping of adjacent axles	169.824
Gross vehicle weight	Varies with number of axles and distances between axle groups	Total vehicle weight limit; example: 80,000 lbs. on five axles	169.824
Notes ¹ A vehicle must cc ² Tire weight limit	omply with each type of weight limit listed. of 600 pounds per inch of tire width only ap	plies to the foremost and rearmost steering axle	28.

Table does not identify weight limit adjustments and special permits.

Weight Limit Adjustments

Туре	Description	Applies To	Citation
Optional route restriction	Weight limit reduction on routes to prevent roadway damage, if set and posted by a road authority	All vehicles generally; exceptions to restrictions include some school buses, vehicles transporting milk, utility vehicles, and garbage and recycling vehicles	169.87, subds. 1, 3-6
Winter weight increase	10% weight limit increase in zones during winter dates set by MnDOT	All vehicles generally; permit required for travel on Interstates	169.826, subd. 1
Harvest season	10% weight limit increase from beginning of harvest to Nov. 30	Some vehicles transporting sugar beets, carrots, or potatoes; requires a permit	169.826, subd. 2
Spring load restrictions	Weight limit decrease on unpaved roads during spring, to (1) 5 tons per axle, and (2) 5/9ths of original weight limits for all axle groupings	All vehicles generally; exceptions to restrictions include some school buses, vehicles transporting milk, utility vehicles, and garbage and recycling vehicles	169.87, subds. 2, 3-6
Idle/emissions reduction technology	Weight limit increase up to 550 lbs. for idle-reduction or emissions-reduction technology	All vehicles generally	169.824, subd. 2
Tow truck exemption	Weight limits not applicable	Some tow trucks with urgent movements	169.829, subd. 2
Utility vehicle exemption	Weight limits not applicable	Some utility vehicles not exceeding 20,000 lbs. per axle	169.829, subd. 3

Special Permits

Туре	Allows	Applies To	Citation
Baled farm products	Up to 12 ft. width and 15 ft. height (14 ¹ / ₂ ft. in Twin Cities metro)	Vehicles transporting baled hay, straw, or cornstalks	169.862 [1979]
Canola-hauling	105,500 lbs. gross vehicle weight	Certain three-vehicle combinations on specific trunk highway routes	169.866 [2008]
Farm products (six-axle)	90,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight on six-axle (or more) vehicles	Vehicles transporting raw or unprocessed agricultural products	169.865, subd. 1 [2008]
Farm products (seven-axle)	97,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight on seven-axle (or more) vehicles	Vehicles transporting raw or unprocessed agricultural products	169.865, subd. 2 [2008]
Forest products	90,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight on six-axle (or more) vehicles	Vehicles transporting unfinished forest products or lumber	169.8261 [2004]
Freight distribution (six-axle)	90,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight on six-axle (or more) vehicles	Vehicles transporting freight to or from a distribution facility located in MnDOT District 4	169.868, subd. 1 [2013]
Freight distribution (seven-axle)	97,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight on seven-axle (or more) vehicles	Vehicles transporting freight to or from a distribution facility located in MnDOT District 4	169.868, subd. 2 [2013]
Livestock	88,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight on six-axle (or more) vehicles	Vehicles transporting livestock	169.824, subd. 2 [2005]
Oversize/ Overweight	General oversize or overweight transport	Various vehicles transporting indivisible loads; single trip, job, and annual permits allowed for vehicles and types of loads specified in statute	169.86, subds. 1, 5
Pulpwood	82,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight on six-axle (or more) vehicles and various increased tire weights	Vehicles transporting pole-length pulpwood	169.863 [1989]
Paper products (three-unit)	108,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight	Some three-vehicle combinations on specific trunk highways	169.864, subd. 1 [2005]
Paper products (two-unit)	90,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight, or 97,000 lbs. on seven-axle vehicles	Some vehicle combinations on specific trunk highways	169.864, subd. 2 [2005]
Snow plows	Up to 10 ft. width	Vehicles with a snow plow blade	169.86, subd. 1b [1997]
Refuse- compactor	Various rear axle weight limit increases	Vehicles with a mounted device that can compact refuse	169.86, subd. 5 (h) [1971]
Tow trucks	Exceeding length and weight limits	Tow trucks hauling disabled or damaged vehicle	168B.15 [2008]